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ABSTRACT

The use of video materials in second language instruction is discussed, particularly as a potential remedy for commonly-used non-communicative or text-bound teaching materials. Research into video use in the second language classroom is reviewed. Basic criteria for selecting instructional video are outlined. Such materials should: contain the desired linguistic material; be thematically interesting; require repeated viewings for the student to comprehend the text fully; have a high audio/visual correlation; and be brief. Presentation techniques for exploiting video materials are also suggested, including use of captioning, colorization, video enhancement and overlay, time-coding for cross-referencing to a text or other materials, use of related print materials, pre-viewing exercises, task-related viewing, and follow-up activities. Additional practical considerations for classroom use are noted. Contains 26 references. (MSE)

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The Message is the Medium: Using Video Materials to Facilitate Foreign Language Performance

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The Message is the Medium:
Using Video Materials to Facilitate Foreign Language Performance

THOMAS J. GARZA

In connection with ongoing efforts to promote proficiency in communicative performance of language students, instructors of foreign languages and ESL/EFL continually seek to make maximum use of precious limited contact hours in the classroom to provide the learners with the most beneficial combination of language and culture in authentic situational contexts. This paper offers an overview of the past twenty years of research and practice in the application of video-based technology in foreign language teaching, and explores the video medium as a potential remedy to commonly used non-communicative or text-bound teaching materials. Practical recommendations for developing and incorporating video materials -- especially authentic media -- into the teaching of language and culture at all levels, from beginning to advanced.

Providing a Context for Communicative Performance

Well over two decades have passed since the foreign language teaching community was awakened to the potential of the theory and practice of "communicative competence" through the works of Hymes (1968, 1972) and Habermas (1970) who provided, respectively, sociolinguistic and structural linguistic interpretations of the term. Throughout the 1980s, pedagogical interpretations and adaptations of "communicative" methods and materials in foreign language teaching -- especially in English as a Second or Foreign Language -- have developed along the lines of Hymes' (1968) notion based on linguistic variability and the relationship between language and actual situational speech roles. He contends that communicative competence describes "what a speaker needs to know to communicate effectively in culturally significant settings" (p. 36).

Such notions of situationally and culturally appropriate "performance" in a foreign language were of paramount importance during the nascence of the proficiency movement and remain the foundation of many performance-based curricula and materials at present. In short, to address communicative competence in the classroom, foreign language teachers have become acutely aware of a universal observation: students require more than good grammar skills and broad vocabularies to make them proficient participants in authentic foreign language situations. Indeed, many students know the frustration of trying to master a foreign language to near-textbook perfection, memorizing interminable lists of lexicon and irregular verb conjugations, declensional paradigms, rules of syntax, and spending hours in the language lab repeating minimal pair drills, only to

arrive finally in the foreign country to encounter a din of unintelligible utterances, an array of unfamiliar social situations, and be unable to report a problem to the hotel manager or to place long-distance phone call through an operator. Stevick (1983) offers the following amusing, yet accurate, example of a non-communicative exchange between a native speaker of English and an ESL student:

- You (with your arms full of books): *"Do you think you could open that door?"*
- Student (without moving to the door): *Yes, I do."*

The student in Stevick's example clearly understands the individual linguistic elements of the utterance of the native speaker of English and, in turn, produces a grammatically correct response. Yet this level of understanding and response, while *linguistically* accurate, fails in terms of communicative performance.

For the purposes of this discussion, the term "communicative performance" describes the student's ability to comprehend and produce language appropriate for a given situation so that all utterances are understood by all participants in the exchange. Such a definition implies tenets of sociolinguistics and discourse analysis which run contrary to purely structural/grammatical approaches to language learning, sometimes even opting for a "nonstandard" (albeit correct!) usage of language in particular communicative situations. As students and teachers alike continue to voice the need to develop active listening and speaking skills -- the foundation of communicative performance -- the search of methods and materials of instruction to address this need continues to intensify.

Emerging quickly from this search was the realization that, even in the very best of the so-called "communicative" textbooks and materials of the 1980s, there was a serious dearth of authentic speech models with which the student could practice both aural comprehension and active oral production in the foreign language. "Authentic" speech models is understood here as examples of situational language use by native speakers as understood by other native speakers. Further, when trying to present authentic language situations for study, printed texts with still photographs and illustrations (the principal classroom interface for most of our students in secondary school- and university-level language programs), even with the addition of audio tape recordings, still lack the dynamic quality necessary to provide an active context to present and work through the various paralinguistic features of the language being used. These features, such as register, tone, gesture, proxemics, etc. are often as essential for the successful completion of the communicative act as is the use of the correct form of a verb.

Only since the introduction of video-based materials into the foreign language classroom in the mid-1970s (around the same time that the term "communicative competence" came into vogue!) have teachers and students had available to them

the raw material necessary to simulate or replicate a real-life immersion experience in both the target language and the target culture. As Lonergan (1984) maintained in the early days of video use in the foreign language classroom:

> Video brings a slice of real life into the classroom. It presents the complete communicative situation. Language learners not only hear the dialogue, they also see the participants in the surroundings where the communication takes place. This visual information not only leads to a fuller comprehension of the spoken language, but can also benefit learners in a number of other ways.

Thus, with the entire communicative situation demonstrated within the context of the video segment, much of the linguistic material, such as lexical meaning and usage, is made clear to the student without a formal dictionary definition. Similarly, social relationships and inherent behavior are contextualized visually so as to clarify intangible concepts such as emotion, disposition, demeanor and tone.

Indeed, sociolinguistic elements permeate virtually all authentic video materials and carefully selected authentic video media offer not only contextualized situations of language use, but provide the added benefits of visually-conveyed information on both linguistic and cultural meaning. Vereshchagin and Kostomarov (1990), Russian specialists in language and culture contend:

> Facts perceived visually become the personal experience of the student, while verbal explanations reflect a detached foreign experience; not without reason is it said that it's better to see something once than to hear about it a hundred times. Besides, visual perception usually cannot be replaced by words. Therefore, the role of the visual mode remains unlimited, unique. Finally, the information input capability of the visual perception mode is almost ten times greater than the audio; therefore, the former is more economical than the latter.

Recently, researchers and specialists such as Kramsch (1993), not only concur with this Soviet perspective, but expand on it, indicating the unique suitability of selected authentic video materials as a foreign language teaching medium, citing the addition of the visual modality and "slice-of-real-life" quality of good video as a significant contributor to total holistic comprehension.

In discussing the teaching of lingua-culture in a foreign language, or the synthesis of foreign language and culture, the authentic nature of instructional materials -- especially video -- is of paramount importance. Materials prepared for native speakers of a language are by virtue of their intended audience saturated with imbedded cultural references that depend on the shared prior text of that

audience. Standard television programming, feature films, commercials, documentaries, and news items can all serve as effective pedagogical source materials for teaching foreign linguoculture on all levels. Because video allows for both audio and visual modalities of information input, the language and cultural material is more readily contextualized and, thus, more accessible to the learner.

For purposes of exploiting the cultural as well as the linguistic material of the video segment, "good" foreign language video should be multi-layered, incorporating current and useful situational language, visually supported paralinguistic elements, and inherent cultural content. It is the presence of such culturally-bound material that, while self-evident to the native speaker of the target language, prevents the learner from enjoying complete, "native-like" comprehension of the segment, even when the language of the segment is fully understood.

As with audio tape recordings, videotapes can be stopped and reviewed at the instructor's or learner's discretion in order to review a certain part of the material. But, unlike audiotape, videotape also allows any single frame or moment of action to be "frozen" on-screen for analysis or commentary. Videotape can also be mechanically edited, altered or manipulated during its production to enhance or modify the content of a segment to make it more conducive to the more purpose-specific tasks of language instruction.

Today, the universal availability and modest cost of standard video playback equipment makes it a *sine qua non* for the proficiency and performance based language classroom. For around four hundred dollars, any language program can be equipped with a video player and monitor to allow for the incorporation of video materials into the basic curriculum and syllabus for instruction. Having made the decision, however, to utilize the rich and varied resources of video materials in foreign language instruction, a myriad of related issues and questions emerges on the most efficient and effective use of such materials, beginning with the issue of selecting the most appropriate materials from among the seemingly unlimited amount of television, documentary, film, and commercial material currently available in many languages on video.

Basic Criteria for Instructional Video

As with selecting all instructional materials, there is good video and bad video for language teaching purposes. The basic criteria for "good" or useful instructional video emerge after considering the inherent needs of the foreign language classroom. In selecting or adapting video materials for language teaching, it is essential that these pedagogical considerations are not subordinated to the medium. As Willis (1983) notes, "...in the excitement of experimenting with a relatively new medium there is a tendency for video viewers (both us, as teachers, and students themselves) to lose sight of language teaching objectives,

and of students' own learning objectives, and to use video for insufficiently motivated purposes" (p. 43).

First, useful video must contain the desired linguistic material for instructional purposes. In most cases, for language courses attempting to develop communicative performance, this criterion means language that is current, useful and accurate in a corresponding situation. The video selector may find it useful to prepare in advance a comprehensive checklist of various linguistic features (specific lexicon, syntactic structures, etc.) and language functions (greetings, leave-takings, introductions, requests, instructions, etc.) which s/he plans to cover in the course and gauge the appropriateness and utility of various video segments by this list.

Second, the video segment should be thematically interesting. This point may seem obvious at first blush, but actually entails a good deal of consideration on the part of the video selector. S/he must consider a variety of relevant variables, such as the constituency of the target audience (breakdown of age, native language(s)), proficiency level, and goal of language study, before attempting to select interesting video segments for a given course. Taking into account such factors, the selector is able to establish general thematic parameters for a specific language program. The goal of this criterion is to produce video materials that deal with subjects in which the students can best identify with the characters and the situations depicted on the screen.

A related sub-point of the second criterion concerns the actual quality or production value of the video segment. The segment itself should present the viewer with some kind of discreet story, with an inherent beginning, middle and end, whether it is dramatic piece, a documentary, or an instructional "how-to" segment. Such a storyline is essential for maintaining student interest during the repeated viewings of the video segment and, thus, the successful treatment of the various topics covered in the video-based course. A natural storyline also allows for comprehension exercise potential based on the segment context as discussed below.

Third, good video materials for foreign language instruction are multi-layered; that is, they require (or at least encourage) repeated viewings in order for the student to comprehend fully the content of the segment. The various "layers" may include linguistic and paralinguistic material, dramatic elements, depictions of relationships, and cultural information. Each of these textual layers may be addressed individually or in combinations through exercises designed to present, review and practice (produce) the material in the video segment. Lonergan (1984) contends that this capacity for repeated viewing is essential for the successful use of instructional video (p. 32).

Fourth, the ideal video segment for the language classroom has a high audio/visual correlation. As mentioned above, the visual element should enhance and clarify the text by contextualizing the language nonverbally. Thus, the language video should provide visual images which closely parallel and support

the text of the audio track. In this connection, interviews and other "talking head" commentaries, in spite of their often provocative and engaging thematics, usually make unsatisfactory video materials for language instruction, since they provide little more communicative information than an audio tape recording (Geddes, 1982).

Finally, there is the issue of length of the video segments themselves. Because techniques of using video in foreign language teaching are, for the most part, still in the test-teaching stages, data concerning the "ideal" length of video segments is still being gathered and analyzed. Still, existing research has provided some general parameters for determining segment length. One early study of video use in the EFL classroom documented teacher preferences for segments between two and ten minutes in length, stating that longer segments provided too much material to cover or handle in lesson format, whereas segments shorter than two minutes were too brief to establish any kind of meaningful storyline (MacKnight, 1981). More recent data collected at Harvard University indicate that useful discreet segments may be as brief as thirty seconds, but found that students' retention of detail -- even for advanced learners -- diminished significantly after approximately seven minutes of viewing, depending on the complexity of the video material. British video specialist Lavery (1984) is even more categorical in delineating the length of a useful video segment for language teaching: [for a one-hour class -- 3-4 minutes]. Basically, instructional video should be kept to concise and discreet segments which allow for thorough presentation and coverage of the linguistic and paralinguistic information in the footage. In some cases, a long segment may be divided into two or more segments for more complete classroom treatment of the material. Or, conversely, several short, thematically related segments may be combined into a useful montage. The amount of actual language and visual information in the segment should be the determining measure in editing down the final usable footage for the classroom.

Currently, video materials for the foreign language classroom come from three primary sources: 1) off-air television broadcast (Maxwell, 1983), 2) commercially available tapes or disc (non-language related), and 3) specially produced foreign language materials including both commercial and teacher-made videos (Silva, 1984). Inherent to all three options is one of the most controversial issues currently surrounding the use of video-based materials: Is it better to use video materials that are specifically designed for language instruction, or to adapt authentic materials for classroom use? Both alternatives have pros and cons associated with their adoption in a program of foreign language study.

Interestingly, virtually all commercially-available British and American foreign language video programs for teaching ESL and EFL have opted for using specially produced footage. The advantages of producing all video footage oneself can be summarized in one word: control. The author of produced video materials

has complete control over some of the most important aspects of a video language course, most notably the language itself. The author(s) of the video script may devise and design entire lessons which focus on specific lexicon, grammatical structures, or themes within the context of a planned and structure storyline. Similarly, self-produced video projects allow for complete control of character and situational development, and, as a result, are able to develop supporting text and exercise materials simultaneously with the video segments.

Paradoxically, the main disadvantage to producing new footage for a language program stems directly from the linguistic, situational, and production control of such a project. By entirely scripting the language, situations, and characters of a given segment, the authenticity of all three elements is threatened. This danger is heightened by attempts of the well-intentioned language teacher to address the particular needs of the audience -- all in one video segment! The frequent result is a video segment depicting unbelievable characters in an improbable situation using contrived and overly prescriptive language.

The alternative to producing new video segments for a language program is use authentic materials and existing video footage, which may be taken from feature films, documentaries, television programming (dramas, comedies, game shows, news, etc.), commercials, travelogues, animated segments, or any other video source and "repurposing" -- or adapting -- them for educational use. Such videotaped materials have the tremendous communicative benefit of having been originally produced for a native audience (Kerridge, 1982). Thus, even "scripted" texts, such as motion picture and television scripts, are written to convey relevant situations, depict believable characters, and use authentic language. Their original goal is to persuade, entertain, inform or evoke emotion in native speakers of the language; as such, these texts can provide students with engaging and functionally rich sources of authentic and highly contextualized language and cultural information.

The obvious disadvantage related to the choice of authentic video footage is the limited control of the linguistic content of the segments. In order to obtain footage that will cover the range of linguistic needs of a given language course, the teacher or curriculum developer may have to screen a sizable amount and variety of material. However, this is primarily a time and personnel consideration; virtually any country with video technology has no end to the amount of existing footage from which to select language teaching materials.

The ultimate *obtainability* of existing footage for a language program -- whether recorded off-air or purchased from a distributor -- depends on securing rights and clearances from the original producer to use the segment in an educational program. This consideration raises another disadvantage to using found footage. In the case of off-air recording for educational use, the law is still problematically vague and in a constant state of flux. In legal terms, teachers seem to fall into a gray area between the rights of a home-video user and a video pirate. As of this writing, it is generally agreed that educators may record

television programming off-air and use that material in a classroom for up to a period of forty days from the program's air date, after which time the taped program must be destroyed (Altman, 1989). Such a practice precludes the assembly of a video library for long-term use in a foreign language program. Thus, the teacher must prepare each lesson anew and design materials to accompany new videos virtually every month of every year s/he uses them.

For materials developers or educators attempting to assemble and purchase authentic materials for a program, the denial of rights by many video sources may prove to be a significant obstacle in assembling a group of suitable segments. In addition, the securing of available rights can be relatively expensive, even compared to the average cost of producing good quality original footage specifically for the classroom. The apparent communicative advantages of authentic video materials must be weighed against the legal and cost issues of obtaining such footage for foreign language teaching.

Exploiting Video Materials for Language Teaching and Learning

Though the term sometimes seems to be read somewhat aggressively in the United States, "video exploitation" has been a part of the British research and literature on video in language teaching for the past decade. The term quite simply refers to the structuring of activities, tasks or exercises, which explain, develop, or expand the communicative information contained in a video segment. It is at the exploitation level that the potential of video as a means of addressing communicative performance in foreign language teaching is greatest. Since each piece of footage has its own particular "character" in terms of images and language, it is essential that appropriate kinds of exploitation be devised for each case.

The first requisite condition for successful implementation and exploitation of video-based materials in the foreign language classroom is to change the viewer's attitude toward watching visual media from predominately passively to overwhelmingly active. The term "active viewing" is essential to the metalanguage of video in language teaching. Active viewing can be encouraged at various levels of designing and using video materials . At the design/production level of assembling video materials, several exploitation techniques can be employed to facilitate active viewing of the segment.

• **Captioning** One of the most successful, yet seldom applied, of these processes is captioning of the video material. Captioning refers to the addition of subtitles -- in the same language as the audio track -- to a video segment (Parlatto, 1986). That is, a segment from a French film would have French subtitles, an American television would have English subtitles, etc. Captioned material appears to the viewer/learner on the screen simultaneously as s/he hears the words spoken.

Two types of captioning exist in broadcast television programming: closed and open. Closed captioning, familiar to most television viewers by the symbol "CC" or " " in program listings, is done by the National Captioning Institute for the hearing impaired or one of several private companies which is equipped to perform this service. A special decoding device must be attached to the television set in order to receive the printed text along the bottom of the screen. Televisions produced in the U.S. after 1991 often come with such a decoder already factory-installed. With a caption decoder and a VCR, closed-captioned programming can be recorded *with* captions onto a blank tape. Thus, captioned off-air television broadcasts can be prepared for use in the classroom at a later time and previously closed-captioned segments are converted into open-captioned materials.

Open captioning or "reverse subtitling" refers to the use of captions on the screen which appear as part of the original broadcast and, thus, require no special equipment to receive or decode them. In the U.S., very few programs are currently aired using open captioning, except for some public service announcements and educational programs produced by the PBS. However, in addition to the above-mentioned technique of recording off-air closed-captioned broadcasts, open captioning could certainly be employed in the production of either original educational videos or in the editing and assembly of authentic found footage.

Open captioning used as video exploitation can be adapted according to the nature of the segment and the goals of the related tasks. There are three options for open captions: 1) verbatim, 2) key words in context, and 3) cloze. Verbatim captioning is possible only when the amount and rate of speech allows for the transcription of each word to appear on the screen for an adequate amount of time. It is particularly useful for segments which aim to develop lexicon and expand grammatical structures. Key words or phrases captioning is recommended when the related segment task is to check for general comprehension of the language, or global meaning of the footage. Cloze captioning, in which certain elements of the script are eliminated from the captions and replaced with blanks, is used when the task of the viewer is to listen for specific information, such as proper names, numbers, certain phonemes or sounds, etc.

An early study conducted by Price (1983) at Harvard University demonstrated that ESL students using captioned and non-captioned video materials "benefited significantly from captioning even with only one viewing" (p. 1). More specifically, the Harvard study tested 450 EFL students in six language competency areas based on the viewing of four different video segments. Half of the group watched the segments with captions, half viewed them without. All of the segments used NCI "closed" captions, which frequently simplify lexically and syntactically difficult language; however, three of the four segments shown in this study maintained verbatim or near verbatim captioning. Over a series of variables controlling for factors such as fatigue, sequence of presentation, and

interest value, the results across the various competency areas showed statistically higher scores for students viewing the segments with captions.

More recently, in a 1989 study conducted at the National Foreign Language Center, Garza (1991) demonstrates a significant level of generalizability of ESL results in captioning studies with other foreign languages, such as Russian. The most significant conclusion suggested by this study is that captioning may help teachers and students of a foreign language bridge the often sizable gap between the attainment of proficiency in reading comprehension and in listening comprehension, the latter usually lagging significantly behind the former. By providing students with a familiar (i.e., comprehensible) graphic representation of an utterance, they are empowered to begin to assign meaning to previously unintelligible aural entities, gradually building their aural comprehension in relation to their reading comprehension. For example, a student of ESL might view a video clip showing two students meeting after class. One says to the other (in the aural text), "Djeetjet?" to which the interlocutor replies, "No, dju?" The non-native student of English is at a loss to assign meaning to the utterances in this everyday conversation. But when the captions show, "Did you eat yet?" "No, did you?" as the underlying language of the spoken text, the ESL student quickly understands and makes the connection between the familiar printed text and the now comprehensible aural text. Like learning a new vocabulary item when reading, the student working with captions will likely not miss the aural cue of a captioned expression the next time s/he encounters it in speech. The data collected in this study all indicate that captions enhance the learning of a foreign language by: 1) increasing the accessibility of the salient language of authentic video materials, giving student the opportunity to understand and enjoy the same types of linguistic input understood by a native speaker of the language; 2) allowing the student to use multiple language processing strategies to accommodate the multiple modalities of input when captions are used; 3) increasing the memorability of the essential language and thus, 4) promoting the use of new lexicon and phrases in an appropriate context.

• **Colorization** Related to the addition of open captions to video-based materials is the use of color highlighting of various elements of the captioning on the screen, such as specific lexicon, idioms, grammatical forms, or phonemes. Such a technique focuses the viewer's attention on specific linguistic features and allows for interface with additional exercise material during the lesson. Throughout the 1980s, a popular PBS program entitled "ColorSounds®," used open captioning of contemporary music videos with color highlighting of both grammatical items and phonemes (Bell, 1984). This program was aimed at developing literacy among American minority youth, but was also used successfully in the EFL classroom to teach pronunciation and

speaking skills (Garza, 1984). This video technique adds another "layer" to the instructional video to promote meaningful, repeated viewing.

• **Video Enhancement and Overlay** Another video exploitation technique which aids in making the visual medium more conducive to presenting and teaching language materials is video enhancement or overlay. Such enhancement encompasses a variety of video "tricks" such as highlighting or colorizing parts of the video image itself for emphasis, adding or deleting parts of the video image as part of an exercise, etc. Graphics, text or a combination of the two may be used similarly to exploit a communicative feature of the segment. For example, a speech balloon -- as in a comic strip -- can be superimposed on the video image to allow students to supply appropriate speech. Video enhancement, like most open captioning, is a production technique added to video footage as part of originally-produced footage, or is added to authentic footage during editing and assembling for classroom use.

• **Time Code** Finally, most commercially-available language video programs have some kind of on-screen reference code, such as a time clock or counter, which serves two main purposes: 1) to provide a kind of video bookmark which allows the viewer to stop the videotape in mid-segment and later return to the same place, and 2) to allow for an accurate interface with textbook or in-class exercises/activities and specific moments in the video segment.

• **Printed Materials** The need for an on-screen video reference code is essential when video exploitation includes a textbook or viewing guide, as most commercial language video programs do. Printed materials can help to organize and structure the student's viewing of any video materials, including off-air or other authentic video segments recorded by the teacher. Language video specialists agree on three basic categories for printed exercise materials to accompany a video segment: preview, task viewing, and follow-up (Stempleski, 1990).

Preview exercises make the video segment more accessible and less frustrating for the student by introducing and reviewing new or difficult material, such as lexicon, grammatical constructions, speech functions and general thematics. These exercises attempt to make the viewing process more immediately useful and enjoyable for the student. They should not, however, make the viewing of the segment superfluous by revealing the storyline, new information, or the humor/suspense in advance. Because the ultimate goal of such exercises is to prepare the student to *view* a segment, art, drawings, diagrams, realia (photographs of actual relevant items from the target culture, such as menus, newspapers, advertisements, tickets, etc.) or any other visual reference is extremely useful. Preview exercises may take a variety of forms: a brief reading passage, diagram fill-in, matching items, problem solving,

Regardless of form, it is important that the preview exercise still requires the learner to process and use the relevant language, not merely provide a list or chart of necessary information. Alternatively, a preview exercise may use a format that is related to the actual video segment, but does not actually occur as part of the segment.

Task viewing exercises are designed to focus the student's attention on each of the many layers -- linguistic, structural, functional, and cultural -- of the video segment. The activities of the task should, as much as possible, require the viewer to watch and listen for information that would be relevant in real-life situations. That is, we read movie schedules to find out what films are playing in which theaters, and times the showings are, or we listen to a weather report to find out if we need to take an umbrella to work or not. Similarly, task viewing exercises maintain the authentic listening and viewing purposes of the real-life situations depicted in the video. It is at this level of text interaction that the discrete storyline of a video segment may be exploited as a comprehension task. The tasks may progress from focusing on the gist of a segment to finer details as the student views and re-views it. The student provides the missing parts of the story -- beginning, middle, or end -- using contextual clues from the segment.

The term "task viewing" is not an arbitrary one for this kind of exercise. They are teaching devices, not testing devices. They are to aid the students' understanding, not test their memories. For example, a set of true/false statements given immediately after a viewing tests memory; the same exercise given before viewing can help students organize their viewing so that they listen for specific information. Thus, the relationship between the preview and task viewing exercises is essential to the guided viewing of the segment by the student. The task viewing exercise may utilize charts, lists, statements, etc. that help the student organize the material in the segment , or have the student relate or associate one level of material (specific language, gestures, facial expressions) in the segment with another (situation, emotion, attitude).

Follow-up exercises are intended to help the viewer see the broader application of what s/he has understood in the video segment. Thus, if the video segment presented an aerobics instructor using various imperative forms, the follow-up exercise could provide more work on the imperative in a different context, such as in a how-to cooking lesson. Follow-up exercises are also useful to show varying degrees of register or tone in conversational exchanges similar to those depicted in the video segment. Ideally, follow-up exercises add to the layers of information presented in the video segment by building on the same linguistic, thematic, and cultural lines.

All three types of textbook interfaces with the video materials -- preview, task viewing, and follow-up -- serve to clarify and exploit the content of the segment and make it useful as a language and situational model for the student [See Appendix A for a summary presentation of all three types of activities]. Together, video and text comprise a potentially powerful team in the foreign

language classroom, especially toward the goal of developing proficiency in communicative performance. With continued research, designing, and test teaching of such materials, video-based language programs may become the standard of proficiency-oriented instruction in our classrooms. In the meantime, it is essential that both teachers and materials developers examine carefully existing video programs for language teaching, as well as their own role in preparing and using such materials in order to asses where we can go from here. The video program does not yet exist that can bring a student from linguistic competence to communicative competence. The role of the instructor as viewing moderator is crucial to the success of all existing programs and must not be subordinated to the video medium itself.

Practical Considerations of Video in Today's Classroom

The most common issue raised by practitioners who are considering adopting the use of video materials in their own foreign language classes concerns the efficacy devoting additional time to select and edit the video materials themselves, and then to prepare useful materials for exploitation of the segments, both in class and out. Given the enormous demands on the instructor's time already cutting deep into any additional time for materials development, the use of video often appears to be more of a luxury or even a burden for many instructors. Such considerations, combined with the growing number of programs -- especially at the secondary school levels -- which require the teacher to prepare materials for and teach several levels of the same language in any given day, seem far to outweigh any possible benefits that could come as a result of using video. Simply stated, it often appears to be far too time consuming to create new video materials for teaching multiple levels of a language at once. And yet, the very flexible nature of the medium itself, together with the inherent richness of a good, well-selected segment, allows for an easy solution: one good video segment may be exploited for use at the beginning, intermediate and advanced levels of language training.

In order to discuss the multi-level exploitation of video materials, it is necessary to invoke the Proficiency Guidelines of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL, 1986). These Guidelines establish descriptors for assessing the proficiency level of learners in all four language skills. The question as to whether or not these Guidelines should have an impact on how or what we teach in the classroom has sparked debate since the adoption of the Provisional Guidelines in 1982. Some language assessment specialists, such as Higgs (1987), contend that the mere existence of criteria for proficiency assessment does not necessarily make any recommendation on either syllabus or methods, stating that the Guidelines themselves are explicitly pedagogy independent and inform neither methodology nor syllabus decisions. In spite of such objections, however, the vast majority of the foreign language teaching

community at-large not only perceive the Guidelines as relevant to actual classroom instruction, but have accepted such terminology a "proficiency-based instruction" and "proficiency-oriented materials" in the profession as standard usage.

Germane to using video materials in foreign language teaching is the utilization of the ACTFL skill level descriptors to assist instructors in selecting or creating exploitation tasks that are appropriate for the particular level of the students. This approach reinforces the notion that most video materials -- especially from authentic sources -- are level independent as foreign language text; any good video text contains material that is accessible to learners at all levels, from novice to superior. Of course, more advanced learners are able to glean more meaning from the text more quickly than novice learners are, but even rank beginners possess the ability to identify cognates and make visual identifications. The key rule to producing video exploitation materials is to adjust the task, not the text.

To this end, the Generic Descriptions for Listening in the ACTFL Guidelines specify at the Novice-Mid level that the learner is:

> Able to understand some short, learned utterances, particularly where context strongly supports understanding and speech is clearly audible. Comprehends some words and phrases for simple questions, statements, high-frequency commands and courtesy formulae about topics that refer to basic personal information or the immediate physical setting. The listener requires long pauses for assimilation and periodically requests repetition and/or a slower rate of speech.

The video materials designer may now sketch out the types of tasks and activities that could be reasonably expected of a learner performing at the novice-mid level, such as:

1) Guess the [Russian, French, etc.] cognates for English words provided.
2) Identify these cognates in the actual video text.
3) Make assumptions about the story from visual clues.
4) Use L1 text to get background information about a new cultural entity.
5) Identify any questions asked in the video text.

Based on such an outline, appropriate Preview, Task Viewing and Follow-Up tasks can be devised to make the video material accessible to learners at their level of performance. Similar types of materials can be devised at all levels of proficiency.

Conclusion

Throughout the literature on video applications in foreign language learning and teaching, two tenets are consistently maintained: 1) the technological capabilities of video are well suited to provide a stimulating and highly engaging learning experience for language students, and 2) properly selected and/or produced video materials can present the necessary elements (authentic language and situations, native participants, cultural references, contextualized speech models, etc.) for effective proficiency-oriented instruction.

And yet, examples of effective video courseware and programs addressing communicative performance are relatively few and often exist only as parts or constituent elements of a larger, more traditionally text-based course. In the university setting, programs such as *Destinos* for Spanish instruction and *French in Action* for French are rare examples of successful video-based courses for foreign language. With so many specialists and practitioners in agreement on the *potential* of this technology, why has so little of this potential been put into service? Perhaps the shortcomings of existing video-based programs and the reluctance of the language teaching community to embrace them stem directly from a preoccupation of their developers on the motivational and stimulating capabilities of the medium, while subordinating the quality of the program content. While it is essential to realize the technological capabilities of the hardware that will execute the program, it is more important to remember that the video segments themselves contain the necessary linguistic and paralinguistic information for the student interested in attaining proficiency in the language and culture.

The last thirty years of foreign language instruction in this country have witnessed the initial popularization and eventual "demise" of two major instructional technologies: the audio-based language laboratory and computer-based language learning[1]. In both cases, the relevant technology was touted as possessing the *potential* for addressing serious issues in language teaching and learning that could not easily and/or effectively be handled in the traditional classroom. When neither innovation brought about the impressive improvements expected, both were quickly dismissed, leaving large numbers of tape carousels and personal computers sitting idle. Interestingly, though, the tape machines and the computers performed as promised throughout their use; the technology never failed to deliver what it had originally promised language teachers: potential. The technology had not failed, the materials had. The listen-

[1]Computer-based instruction here refers to the technology and materials that existed prior to the development of multimedia platforms for micro computers since 1990. Needless to say, the newer media-based machines are of great value to instructors wishing to incorporate video and other media into their teaching, especially on an individualized basis.

and-repeat sequences, the rote drill-and-practice exercises, and the electronic page-turners did not utilize the potential of their media.

The potential of the most recent technology, video, has understandably been viewed skeptically by some. To an even greater degree than the language lab or the computer, video offers an attractive, though somewhat deceptive, alternative to writing long lesson plans and conducting tedious conversation sections for language classes. The uninitiated teacher may choose simply to play a videotape and saturate the students with "comprehensible input" or "listening comprehension" practice. Such an approach exploits video as little more than a low-tech babysitter from which neither student nor teacher profits. Given the current state of video technology, instructors and materials developers need never resort to such measures. Unlike its technological predecessors in language teaching, video offers the instructor almost complete control in the selection, design, production and execution of the source materials. Instructors can create an instructional package of video and exploitation materials tailored to the needs, goals and constituency of any given class that actually exploits the potential of this powerful medium, particularly as a facilitator of communicative performance in a foreign language.

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APPENDIX A: Text Exploitation of Video Materials

1. *Preview*
   Makes the material (linguistic and non-linguistic) of the video segment more readily accessible to the learner by:
   - Introducing new concepts (lexical, grammatical, functional, cultural, etc.) *before* the first viewing of the segment;
   - Providing background information to help learner develop native-like schemata or "prior text" to understand video material (basis for cultural literacy);
   - Allowing learner to apply native language strategies to new material;
   - Preparing the learner to comprehend the material without giving away the "punch" of the segment.
2. *Task Viewing*
   Guides the learner in "peeling" away the various layers of the video segment and discover and master the linguistic, paralinguistic, and cultural material contained in it by:
   - Requiring the learner to view and re-view the video material in order to solve the assigned task;
   - Focusing the learner's attention on relevant elements in the segment;
   - Organizing and structuring the viewing to make the material memorable and relevant, not testing his/her memory;
   - Maintaining the integrity of the original segment.
3. *Follow-Up*
   Help the learner understand the broader application of the material covered in the segment by:
   - Adding to or building on the layers of information presented in the video;
   - Extending the frame of usage of the material already learned;
   - Providing additional material to complete or supplement the portrait created by the video material.

ADJUST THE TASK, NOT THE TEXT!